Department of Health and Human Services/Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Global AIDS Program (GAP)

Under the direction of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator's Office, the HHS/CDC Global AIDS Program (GAP) is a proud partner in the unified U.S. Government effort to implement the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. GAP helps resource-constrained countries prevent HIV infection; improve treatment, care, and support for people living with HIV; and build capacity and infrastructure to address the global HIV/AIDS pandemic.

Making an Impact: Stories from the Field — *Malawi*

Electronic touch screen systems are being introduced at multiple centers in Malawi, including the Malawi AIDS Counseling and Resource Organization (MACRO). Above, a nurse at one of the pilot sites demonstrates the functions of the touch screen system for **Claude A. Allen, when he was serving as Deputy Secretary for the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.**

The Global AIDS Program in Malawi (GAP Malawi) collaborated with the Baobab Health Partnership to develop a touch screen client information management system at the Malawi AIDS Counseling and Resource Organization (MACRO). MACRO is the largest provider of voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) in Malawi, serving approximately 50,000 individuals each year.

The touch screen system was developed to improve the accuracy, completeness, and timeliness of information collected on clients tested and counseled at MACRO. The new system replaced the 2-page paper form previously used to collect the information about VCT clients. At the pilot site, MACRO staff use touch screen computer terminals to enter registration, counseling and testing information about clients at the time the information is collected.

This innovative system provides a number of improvements to the traditional paper form system. For example, it improves the accuracy of data collected by eliminating the possibility of logically impossible answers (e.g. men being pregnant). Accuracy is also improved by eliminating the data entry step, a process prone to human error.

In addition, the touch screen system promotes the completeness of data by prompting staff with each question. This eliminates the problem of missed or forgotten questions. The system also enables the timely use of data by eliminating the time lag between data collection and entry into a computer system.

Accurate, complete, and timely information enables organizations such as MACRO to better monitor VCT services, better understand the characteristics of clients served, and plan for needed supplies such as HIV test kits. Ultimately this information can further strengthen efforts of organizations such as MACRO to plan and provide the highest quality services.

With its inexpensive, yet durable, hardware and touch screens that are easy to use by counselors with limited computer skills, the system is appropriate technology for organizations in resource-constrained countries such as Malawi. With funding through the President's Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief, GAP Malawi is currently exploring opportunities to expand the use of the touch screen technology to additional MACRO sites in Malawi. GAP Malawi is also supporting Baobab to develop another software configuration of the information system to be piloted at Lighthouse, an organization providing HIV/ AIDS care and treatment in Malawi.

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